

EVERYDAYHEROES



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Paris Police Officer Brent Wilson

ABBIE DARST | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Driven by his faith and desire to help people, Paris Police Officer Brent Wilson has served his hometown community for more than five years. Wilson transferred to Paris from Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement a year and half into his career. In Paris, he joined with local pastors and developed a chaplain program. As the agency's main chaplain, Wilson is honored to serve both his community and his fellow officers. Wilson is married to his wife, Santana, and has two children, ages 3 and 6.

I wanted to be a chaplain for the same reasons I wanted to be a police officer — to be there to help. In a crisis situation or where there's a death or something bad has happened, as an officer, when you're there, you want to figure out what happened and solve the crime because that's your job. But then there's the emotional part and the family aspect of it. It's hard to deal with both at the same time. A chaplain is needed. He or she is someone who can take the family aside, talk to them and try to figure out a way to calm them down. I think God put it on my heart initially. I think God's plans are not what you think they'll be, and then he steers you in a path where you end up staying.

I'm both chaplain and road officer. If I get a call, it is my call and I have to have someone help. There are lots of people in the community I can call to help with the chaplain aspect, so I can take care of the police aspect of it. It's like having a dual personality.

I could write you a book about the situations I've encountered. There is a lot of stuff I don't want to say, and some of it doesn't need to be said. I just need to keep ahold of it. The biggest thing in every situation is being there to show love and compassion, because it's a time when there's none there.

My father (Gary Wilson, Lexington Division of Police) played a huge role in me choosing a law enforcement career, though he did not want me to do it — for obvious reasons. As a dad, I understand that now. My dad really loved it, and to see someone do a job they absolutely love, it's hard to say, 'I don't want to do that.' He loved every second of it.

“*The biggest thing in every situation is being there to show love and compassion, because it's a time when there's none there.*”

But for me personally, it's seeing the police officer with lights and sirens going somewhere — I want to know where he's going. I love getting the opportunity to help somebody. As a kid, people would come up to my dad and say, 'You arrested me, but I want to thank you for that because you really helped me.' My dad not only did his job, he would talk to people and give them a chance. That's what I hope to bring to the table — going a little beyond just being a police officer.

My wife would say I am not the same man she married. Life as a police officer is a difficult battle. It's tough because as you work and respond to calls, you can lose patience. If you don't keep tabs on it, it can change you completely. Luckily I have a beautiful wife, and she is very understanding and has learned to adapt.

When I get mean with my wife that is my realization I need to do something different because I'm usually a very patient man. I'll immediately pray and say 'God, I don't know why I'm like this. I need to get myself in check.' My faith is the biggest way I keep myself in check, for sure.

Policing in my hometown is so situational. At times, it's great because if I roll up on scene and someone knows me and he says, 'Hi Brent.' He could be completely angry, but seeing me, he calms down. But, I also have arrested some of my friends, and that is tough. But if I'm arresting them, I know I'll treat them right. So it's a best-case scenario for what it is.

During the week, I never see my wife. I keep the kids all day and my parents will watch them for the hour in between me going into work and her coming home. I get home and she's in bed. I get to see her on the weekends. It's tough. It takes a special woman to be a police officer's wife.

I really have a need to help somebody. I have a desire to figure out a way to help you in a way that you are not only helped but you can look at me as a friend, too. I don't want to be a cop or an enemy. That is what I strive for every day. I want to show up on a scene and be able to talk to you like a person and help you in whatever way I can, and in the end, we're thanking each other.

If my son wanted to become an officer, I absolutely would support him in every way. But when you go through the things we go through, you wouldn't wish it on anybody. If I look at my son the day he graduates from the academy — I am going to think of everything he will see and go through. Knowing somebody is chewing out my son, trying to fight him or hurt him in some way, it would be tough.

We all take an oath and want to protect and serve our communities — someone taking your life is the ultimate sacrifice — we all prepare in different ways, but we're all prepared for it. To think of your son going into something like that, is tough. But if it gets to that point, he'll be grown; he won't be my little boy anymore.

If I could tell the whole world anything about police officers, it would be, 'You have to remember we are human, just like you. We're not special. We have training, but we are human inside just like anybody else. We're going to mess up sometimes, but that's just how it is.' We will be scrutinized more because we're public servants, but people often forget that very important human factor.

The most interesting part of my career is seeing how everyone polices differently, but it all works together. 🇺🇸

Abbie Darst can be reached at abbie.darst@ky.gov or (859) 622-6453.